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STATE DIRECTORS
National Association of State Directors
of Career Technical Education Consortium

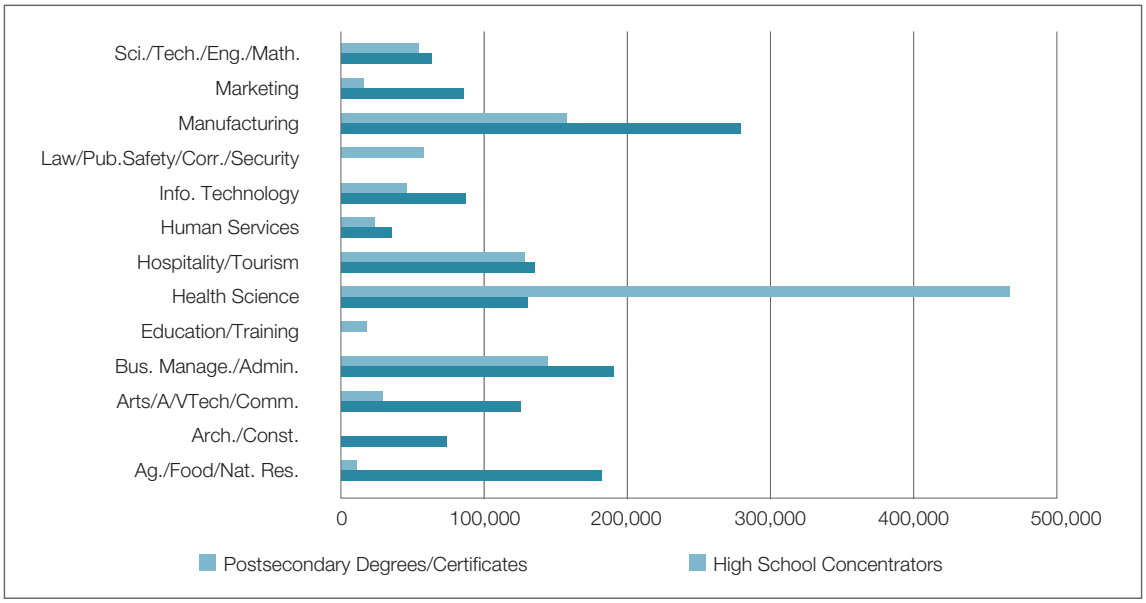
Career Technical Education and Labor Market Demand

Current data indicates that Career Technical Education (CTE) graduates with high school diplomas or postsecondary skills are preparing for careers in fields that are growing or in high-demand.[i] Matching employability skills with workforce demand has been an issue among industries across the nation. CTE provides relevant academic and technical coursework leading to industry-recognized credentials for secondary, postsecondary, and adult learners. Further, CTE affords students the opportunity to gain the knowledge, skills, and credentials needed to secure careers in growing, high-demand fields.

The National Career Clusters™ Framework provides a vital structure for organizing and delivering quality CTE programs through comprehensive programs of study.[ii] In total, there are 16 Career Clusters™ in the Framework, representing more than 79 Career Pathways to help students navigate their way to greater success in college and career.

A recent study of CTE enrollment rates and labor market data indicates that CTE graduates are often pursuing careers in high-demand Career Clusters™.[iii] Recent high school graduates who concentrated in CTE most often focused in the following Career Clusters™ : Manufacturing; Business Management & Administration; Agriculture, Food & Natural Resources; Hospitality & Tourism; Health Science; and Information Technology. Postsecondary students earning a degree or certificate in CTE most often majored in Health Science; Manufacturing; Business Management & Administration; Hospitality & Tourism; Law, Public Safety, Corrections & Security; and Science, Technology, Engineering & Mathematics. As shown in the "Labor Market Growth by Career Cluster" section, many of the Career Clusters™ mentioned above, those with the highest rates of secondary and postsecondary CTE student enrollment, are also expected to experience some of the fastest growth in employment or the highest total employment of all Career Clusters™ by 2018.

High School Graduate CTE Concentrators and Postsecondary Certificate/Degree Holders in CTE by Career Cluster™



Source: Georgetown Center on Education and the Workforce, Career Clusters: Forecasting demand for high school through college jobs: 2008-2018, Tables 23-24,; Note: No information was available from this source on the Finance and Government & Public Administration Career ClustersTM. Also, the data available for Manufacturing also includes data for the Transportation, Distribution & Logistics and Architecture and Construction Career ClustersTM. Other titles have been adjusted to fit the titles of the Career ClustersTM.

Based on research that analyzes market needs in relation to the 16 Career Clusters™, the lists below identify the Career Clusters™ that are expected to experience the fastest growth by 2018, and the Career Clusters™ projected to have the largest total employment by 2018.

Labor Market Growth by Career Cluster™ – Top 5[iv]

TOP 5 Career Clusters™ with Fastest Growth (by % change in employment by 2018)

1) Information Technology: +23%
2) Health Science: +21%
3) Human Services: +19%
4) Law, Public Safety, Corrections, Security: +14%
5) Education & Training: +14%

TOP 5 Largest Career Clusters™ (by total employment by 2018)

1) Business, Management & Administration: 23,847,200
2) Marketing, Sales & Service: 22,377,400
3) Hospitality & Tourism: 20,693,800
4) Health Science: 13,444,800
5) Transportation, Distribution & Logistics: 12,624,900

Many CTE programs maintain alignment of their courses to labor market demands by staying attuned to the needs of local businesses and industries. CTE helps students attain high-demand skills, preparing them for postsecondary education and increasing their future labor market competitiveness. Labor market projections, such as those shown in this brief, can aid CTE educators and other stakeholders as they work to prepare students for postsecondary education and careers.

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i Please note: This does not necessarily indicate that CTE students work within the same Career Cluster™ that they studied in high school or college.
ii National Association of State Directors of Career Technical Education Consortium, The 16 Career Clusters. Available at: http://www.careertech.org/career-clusters/glance/clusters.html.
iii Georgetown Center on Education and the Workforce, Career Clusters: Forecasting demand for high school through college jobs: 2008-2018. Tables 23,24,26. Available at: http://www9.georgetown.edu/grad/gppi/hpi/cew/pdfs/clusters-complete-update1.pdf (November 2011).
iv Georgetown Center on Education and the Workforce (November 2011).